

Message Text

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44

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8578
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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, UK, MU, JO
SUBJECT: JORDAN CHIEF OF STAFF EVALUATION OF OMAN WAR

REF: AMMAN 1264

1. WE DISCUSSED JORDANIAN PLANS FOR ASSISTANCE TO OMAN IN INDIRECT WAY WITH FCO ASSISTANT MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT HEAD CLARK RECENTLY. CLARK HAS SERVED IN OMAN AND JUST RETURNED FROM TRIP ACCOMPANYING MINSTATE ENNALS (SEE SEPARATE REPORTS). HE CONFIRMED THAT PLANS ARE TO USE JORDANIAN BATTALION AS GARRISON FOR MIDWAY ROAD, THE ROLE PREVIOUSLY ASSIGNED TO IRANIAN CONTINGENT.

2. WHEN WE SUGGESTED (WITHOUT REVEALING ANY SOURCES OR MAKING A BIG POINT OF IT) THAT JORDANIANS MAY BE BORED WITH A RELATIVELY PASSIVE ROLE, CLARK REPLIED THAT THEY WOULD FIND ACTIVITY ENOUGH JUST KEEPING ALIVE IN THAT ROUGH AND UNFAMILIAR TERRAIN. HE POINTED OUT THAT SUPPLIES ARE DIFFICULT AND JUST MOVING AROUND HAS ITS PROBLEMS. BESIDES, IT WOULD DEPEND ON WHAT ROTATION POLICY JORDANIANS USED. HE NOTED THAT IRANIANS ROTATED THE TROOPS ABOUT EVERY THREE MONTHS. THIS DID NOT PROVIDE TIME FOR THEM TO GET BORED. MEANWHILE, THERE WOULD BE MANY TASKS SUCH AS DAILY SWEEPING OF UNSURFACED ROADS FOR

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MINES PLANTED NIGHT BEFORE.

3. COMMENT: CLARK'S POINT ON ROTATION POLICY MIGHT BE WORTH FOLLOWING UP IN AMMAN. WHILE JORDANIAN AIRLIFT CAPACITY IS OF COURSE HARDER TO COME BY, AND THERE IS PROBABLY LESS NEED TO EXPOSE LARGE NUMBER OF TROOPS TO COMBAT CONDITIONS AS IN IRANIAN CASE, PERHAPS FREQUENT ROTATION WOULD BE ONE ANSWER IF JORDANIANS BECAME JUMPY. MORE BROADLY, WE WOULD HOPE THAT NRE ACTIVE ROLEHJEIWD BE GIVEN TO JORDANIANS ONCE THEY CONVINCCQ BRITISH HIGH COMMAND IN OMAN THAT THEY HAD GOTTEN THEIR FEET WET UNDER LOCAL CONDITIONS. IDEA THAT GUERRILLA WARFARE CAN BE ENDED QUICKLY DIES HARD, WE ARE AWARE, BUT IRANIANS SEEM TO BE TALKING LESS ALONG THAT LINE NOW THAT THEIR NOSES HAVE BEEN BLOODIED THAN ARE ARABS WHO ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING. WHILE FCO OFFICIALS READILY ACKNOWLEDGE MANY BRITISH CONTRACT OFFICERS MIGHT FEEL THEY HAVE A GOOD DEAL GOING IN OMAN, IT WOULD BE A FOOLHARDY OUTSIDE OBSERVER WHO WOULD SUGGEST THAT GUERRILLA WARFARE IN OMAN CAN BE BROUGHT TO A DEFINITIVE END BY MILITARY MEANS DESPITE CONTRARY EXPERIENCE IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD.

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